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I Will Never Forget

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(NO COMMENTS)

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Born and raised in Brooklyn, the twin towers shaped my landscape as I overcame the challenges of being a military officer and surgeon.


Where were you? On September 11, 2001, President George Bush admonished, “None of us will ever forget this day.” On that clear morning in New York City I watched in real time, from the roof of Kings County Hospital in Brooklyn, as a second plane collided with the South Tower of the World Trade Center.


Within hours the towers collapsed and Kings County Hospital, a level one trauma center, had mobilized personnel and was ready to accept mass casualties. However, there were few survivors. Anger and sadness filled me. I lost friends. My sister worked at the trade center and in high school, I delivered packages to the towers as a messenger. Many in New York, across the nation, and


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Over the next decade, I would join many others in uniform during the Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom campaigns.

throughout the world shared my sadness for the lives lost in the aftermath of that attack. Born and raised in Brooklyn, the twin towers shaped my landscape as I overcame the challenges of inner city life that prepared me for a career as a naval officer and surgeon. On September 11, 2001, my beloved New York City skyline was changed and everything would forever be different.

Over the next decade, I would join many others



I never expected that on the 10th Anniversary of 9/11, a decade after I watched my New York City skyline change, I would be half way around the world in Afghanistan caring for Marines in a tent.

in uniform during the Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom campaigns. Multiple deployments took me away from the comforts of home, my wife, my son, my daughter, family, and friends. On the USS Carl Vinson, I served with 6000 other volunteers dedicated to a cause larger than all of us– the common enterprise of liberty, justice, and righteousness. Years later I would join thousands of others in service in a different kind of campaign in the deserts of Afghanistan supporting the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Forces. I never expected that on the 10th Anniversary of 9/11, a decade after I watched my New York City skyline change, I would be half way around the world in Afghanistan caring for Marines in a tent.

Devastating battle injuries claimed lives and inflicted physical and invisible wounds that changed individuals forever. Over the years of caring for our wounded, ill, and injured, I have witnessed pain and suffering and learned invaluable lessons about humility and gratitude. Sometimes the injuries outmatched my skill as a surgeon. The truth is: some injuries cannot be fixed and some lives cannot be saved. I accepted this painful truth with humility. Yet, without any regret or reservation, our team always focused on the mission of caring for patients that had sacrificed much and in almost all circumstances exceeded all expectations.

We remember those that lost and sacrificed their lives in service with ceremony, and their lives offer great lessons of bravery, honor, courage, and commitment. I am grateful and proud to be among those that serve and sacrificed for this country that welcomed my West African immigrant parents, and provided opportunities for their “made-in-the-USA” son to become a physician and surgeon. Why do we remember this day and those we have lost? We remember this day because in doing so they live again and we raise and honor all those that

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those that have fallen
and given their lives in
service of our country
and for a cause larger
than themselves.

have fallen and given their lives in service of our country and
for a cause larger than themselves. I will never forget.

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